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Message Text

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44
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 OMB-01 AID-05 IGA-02 DHA-02 /092 W
---------- 029143
P R 272002Z SEP 76
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1897
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
AMEMBASSY PARIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, LE, US
SUBJECT: LEBANESE REACTIONS TO RECENT U.S. STATEMENTS AND MESSAGE

1. SUMMARY. U.S. POLICY STATEMENT, LETTER FROM PRESIDENT FORD TO PRESIDENT SARKIS, AND EVEN ID AL-FITR GREETINGS TO PM KARAME HAVE RECEIVED WIDESPREAD FAVORABLE COMMANT IN LEBANESE POLITICAL AND MEDIA CIRCLES. IN ADDITION TO REAFFIRMATION OF STANDING U.S. POSITIONS ON LEBANON, COMMENTATORS NOTE INCREASED U.S. AWARENESS OF CONNECTION BETWEEN PALESTINIAN AND LEBANESE PROBLEMS AND BELIEVE THEY SEE SIGNS OF MORE ACTIVIST U.S. ROLE IN LEBANON. END SUMMARY.

2. U.S. POLICY STATEMENT. U.S. STATEMENT HAS BEEN VERY WELL RECEIVED. AN-NAHAR SEPT 26 PRINTED
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COMMENTARY, NOTING IN PARTICULAR SIMILARITY OF U.S.

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AND FRENCH STATEMENTS AND IDENTICAL U.S. AND FRENCH OFFERS OF INITIATIVES TO HELP SOLVE LEBANESE CRISIS. PAPER NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT FRENCH CLEARLY OFFERED MILITARY AID, WHILE U.S. STATEMENT "CONTAINED WHAT AMOUNTS TO BACKING FOR AN INITIATIVE OF THAT KIND." AN-NAHAR ALSO NOTED CLEAR U.S. OPPOSITION TO PARTITION AND SUPPORT OF POLITICAL COMPROMISES EMBODIED IN FEBRUARY CONSTITUTIONAL DOCUMENT. NOTING ALLUSION IN U.S. STATEMENT TO PALESTINIAN PROBLEM, PAPER COMMENTS "IT IS THE FIRST TIME IN WHICH AN OFFICIAL AMERICAN STATEMENT TIES UP THE FATE OF THE LEBASES CRISIS WITH THE FATE OF THE INTERESTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE IN THIS CLEAR WAY, AS IF THERE IS A PROMISE IN THAT OR SOMETHING LIKE A PROMISE."

3. "MONDAY MORNING" SEPT 27 CARRIES THREE-PAGE UNSIGNED "NEWS ANALYSIS" ON "THE U.S. ROLE IN LEBANON" INCLUDING EXCERPTS FROM SEPT 23 STATEMENT AND EARLIER COMMENTS BY PRESIDENT FORD AND SECRETARY KISSINGER, PRAISE FOR U.S. DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS TO LEBANON AND FAVORABLE COMMENT ON U.S. HUMANITARIAN AID TO BOTH SIDES (TEXT BEING POUCHED DEPT AND USIA.)

4. LETTER FROM PRESIDENT FORD TO PRESIDENT SARKIS. U.S. CONGRATULATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY NEW PRESIDENT UPON HIS RETURN TO EAST BEIRUT FROM CHTAURA ON SEPT 23, DAY OF INAUGURATION, AND WERE REPORTEDLY THE FIRST RECEIVED FROM ANY FOREIGN HEAD OF STATE. EMBASSY LOCAL EMPLOYEE, WHO DELIVERED LETTER AND WHO SPENT WEEKEND ON CHRISTIAN SIDE IN CONTACT WITH SEVERAL PROMINENT CHRISTIANS, REPORTS THAT MESSAGE WAS EXTREMELY WELL RECEIVED AND THAT ITS IMPACT IN FACT GREW AS WORD OF ITS RECEIPT SPREAD FROM PERSON TO PERSON. SOME RIGHTISTS COMPARED LETTER FAVORABLY TO LETTER FROM FRENCH CHIEF OF STATE. IMPACT OF LETTER SEEMS TO BE INCREASED EXPECTATIONS, AT LEAST ON CHRISTIAN SIDE, THAT U.S. WILL NOW BEGIN MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN
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LEBANON. SOME RIGHTISTS EVEN SEEM TO EXPECT THAT U.S. WILL PLAY DECISIVE ROLE IN BRINGING CONFLICT TO END. L'ORIENT SEPT 26 PUBLIISHED ACCOUNT OF GREETINGS FROM NUMEROUS FOREIGN CHIEFS OF STATE, INCLUDING COMPLETE TEXTS OF LETTERS FROM PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING AND PRESIDENT FORD, AS WELL AS SARKIS'S REPLIES. REPLY TO PRESIDENT FORD WAS NOTABLY DIFFERENT FROM REPLY TO GISCARD IN ITS

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ALLUSION TO IMPORTANCE OF OVERALL MIDDLE EAST PEACE SETTLEMENT, AND U.S. ROLE THEREIN, IN RELATION TO SETTLEMENT IN LEBANON.

5. ID AL-FITR GREETINGS TO PRIMIN KARAME. L'ORIENT-LE JOUR SEPT 26 PUBLISHED COMPLETE TEXT OF PRESIDENT FORD'S ID GREETINGS TO PRIMIN KARAME AND EXCERPTS OF SECRETARY KISSINGER'S GREETINGS. PAPER COMMENTED THAT BOTH MESSAGES WERE "CLEARLY MORE CATEGORICAL AS FAR AS THE U.S. IS CONCERNED TO PRESERVE 'THE INDEPENDENCE OF LEBANON, THE SECURITY OF ITS TERRITORY AND THE UNITY OF ITS PEOPLE' THAN LAST YEAR ON THE OCCASION OF THE SAME FEAST."
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